The Mowing-Devil:

Or, Strange *NEWS* out of

Hartford-ſhire.

Being a True Relation of a Farmer, who Bargaining with a Poor *Mower*, about the Cutting down Three Half Acres of *Oats*; upon the *Mower*'s asking too much, the *Farmer* ſwore, *That the Devil ſhould Mow it, rather than He:* And ſo it fell out, that that very Night, the Crop of *Oats* ſhew'd as if it had been all of a Flame; but next Morning appear'd ſo neatly Mow'd by the Devil, or ſome Infernal Spirit, that no Mortal Man was able to do the like.

Alſo, How the ſaid *Oats* ly now in the Field, and the Owner has not Power to fetch them away.

Licenſed, *Auguſt* 22th. 1678.

THE

MOWING-DEVIL:

OR,

Strange NEWS out of *Hartford-ſhire*, &c.

MEn may dally with Heaven, *and Criticiſe on Hell, as Wittily as they pleaſe, but that there are really ſuch places, the wiſe Diſpenſations of Almighty Providence, does not ceaſe continually to evince. For if by thoſe accumulated circumſtances which generally induces us to the belief of any thing beyond our ſenſes, we may reaſonably gather that there are certainly ſuch things as* Devils, *we muſt neceſſarily conclude, that theſe* Devils *have a* Hell; *and*

as there is a Hell, *there muſt be a* Heaven, *and conſequently a GOD; and ſo all the Duties of Chriſtian Religion as indiſpenſible ſubſequents neceſſarily follow.*

The firſt of which Propoſitions, this enſuing Narrative does not a little help to Confirm.

For no longer ago, than within the compaſs of this preſent Month of *Auguſt*, there hapned ſo unuſual an Accident in *Hartfordſhire*, as is not only the general Diſcourſe, and Admiration of the whole Country; but may for its Rarity Challenge any other event, which has for theſe many years bin Produc't in any other County whatſoever. The Story thus.

In the ſaid County, Lives a Rich induſtrious Farmer, who perceiving a ſmall Crop of his (of about three Half-Acres of Land which he hadSowed with *Oats*) to be Ripe and fit for Gathering, ſent to a poor Neighbour whom he knew worked commonly in the Summer-time at Harveſt Labor, to agree with him about Mowing, or Cutting the ſaid *Oats* down; The poor Man as it behoov'd Him, endeavour'd to ſell the Sweat of his Brows and Marrow of his Bones at as dear a Rate as reaſonably he might, and therefore askt a good round Price for his Labour, which the Farmer taking ſome exceptions at, bid him much more under the uſual Rate than the poor Man askt above it; So that ſome ſharp Words had paſt, when the Farmer told

told him he would Diſcourſe with him no more about it. Whereupon the honeſt *Mower* recollecting with himſelf, that if he undertook not that little Spot of Work, he might thereby loſe much more Buſineſs which the Farmer had to imploy him in beſide, ran after him, and told him, that, rather than diſpleaſe him, he would do it at what rate in Reaſon he pleas'd; and as an inſtance of his willingneſs to ſerve him, propos'd to him a lower price, than he had Mowed for any time this Year before. The irretated *Farmer* with a ſtern look, and haſty geſture, told the poor man, *That the Devil himſelf ſhould Mow his* Oats *before he ſhould have any thing to do with them*, and upon this went his way, and left the ſorrowful Yeoman, not a little troubled that he had diſoblig'd one in whoſe Power it lay to do him many kindneſſes.

But how ever, in the happy ſeries of an interrupted proſperity, we may ſtrut, and plume our ſelves over the miſerable Indigencies of our neceſſitated Neighbours; yet there is a juſt God above, who weighs us not by our Bags, nor meaſures us by our Coffers; but looks upon all men indifferently, as the common Sons of *Adam*; ſo that he who carefully Officiates that Rank or Station wherein the *Almighty* has plac't him, tho but a mean one, is truly more worthy the Eſtimation of all Men, than he who is prefer'd to ſuperior dignities, and abuſes them: And what greater abuſe, than the contempt of Men below him: the relief of whoſe common neceſſities is none of the leaſt Conditions wherby he holds all his *Good things*; which when

that Tenure is forfeited by his default, he may juſtly expect ſome Judgment to enſue; or elſe that thoſe riches wherby he prizes himſelf ſo extravagantly, may ſhortly be taken from him.

We will not attempt to fathom the cauſe, or reaſon of *Preternatural* events; but certain we are, as the moſt Credible and General Relation can inform us, that that ſame night this poor *Mower*, and *Farmer* parted, his Feild of *Oats* was publickly beheld by ſeveral Paſſengers, to be all on a Flame, and ſo continued for ſome ſpace, to the great conſternation of thoſe that beheld it.

Which ſtrange news being by ſeveral carried to the *Farmer* next morning, could not but give him a great Curioſity to go and ſee what was become of his Crop of *Oats*, which he could not imagin, but was totally devour'd by thoſe ravenous Flames which were obſerv'd to be ſo long reſident on his Acre and half of Ground.

Certainly a reflection on his ſuddain and indiſcreet expreſſion, [*That the Devil ſhould Mowe his* Oats *before the poor Nan ſhould have any thing to do with them*] could not but on this occaſion come into his Memory. For if we will but allow our ſelves ſo much leiſure, to conſider how many hits of providence go to the production of one Crop of Corn, ſuch as the aptitude of Soyl, the Seaſonableneſs of Showers, Nouriſhing Solſtices and Salubrious winds, *&c.* we ſhould rather welcome Maturity

Maturity with Devout Acknowledgments than prevent our gathering of it by our profuſe wiſhes.

But not to keep the Curious Reader any longer in ſuſpence, the inquiſitive *Farmer* no ſooner arriv'd at the place where his *Oats* grew, but to his admiration he found the Crop was Cut down ready to his hands; and as if the Devil had a mind to ſhew his dexterity in the art of *Husbandry*, and ſcorn'd to mow them after the uſual manner, he cut them in round Circles, and plac't every ſtraw with that exactneſs that it would have taken up above an Age, for any Man to perform what he did in that one night: And the man that ows them is as yet afraid to remove them.

FINIS.